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Georgia Lawyer Indicted in 1958 Ala. Church Blast

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., Sept. 27 (UPI) —A grand jury has indicted an avowed racist Georgia lawyer for a 1958 bombing of a black church here and more indictments will be sought for other racial bombings in addition to a murder indictment already returned in another case, sources said today.

The sources said the indictment was sent to Marietta, Ga., to be served on J. B. Stoner, director of the National States Rights Party. Georgia officials confirmed that the indictment had been forwarded.

Stoner was indicted Monday for the 1958 bombing of the black Bethel Baptist Church, sources said. No one was injured in the blast.

Stoner said he expected to be arrested shortly and would fight extradition to Alabama. "I'm not guilty," he said.

Sources told The Washington Post last night that Stoner's name came up during a separate investigation into the 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, in which four children were killed.

Stoner has not been linked to that bombing, they said.

A spokesman for the Cobb County Sheriff's Department in Marietta said last night that he was still awaiting the indictment of Stoner. When it is received, said Chief Deputy Leonard Holt, a Georgia fugitive warrant will be obtained and served on Stoner. The warrent is a formality enabling Georgia officials to act on another state's indictment, Holt said.

Stoner said that, if arrested, he would file a habeas corpus petition naming an undercover FBI agent and a Birmingham police detective who allegedly tried to recruit him in 1957 for the bombing of Bethel Baptist Church, whose minister, the Rev. Fred L. Shuttleswoth, was a black civil rights leader.

"This same undercover agent wanted me to arrange for the killing of Martin Luther King (Jr.). This was about 1957," Stoner said. At the time, King, who was slain in 1968 in Memphis, was pastor of a church in Montgomery, Ala.

"He insisted that I find a good marksman to kill King—they wanted it done by rifle," Stoner said.

He said he didn't know why the men also wanted the Birmingham church bombed. "I know I didn't have anything to do with it," Stoner said.

Former Ku Klux Klansman Robert Chambliss, 73, was indicted by the same grand jury Monday on four counts of first-degree murder for the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. He was arrested at his home and is being held without bond.